

Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1-6, 8 and 9 are canceled. New claims 10-31 are added. Please note that all claims currently pending and under consideration in the referenced application are shown below. Please enter these claims as amended. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-9 (canceled)

10. (new) A method of removing oxide polymer and metal polymer from a contact opening in a dielectric layer on a semiconductor substrate, the method comprising performing a nitric acid solution dip followed by a phosphoric acid solution dip.

11. (new) The method of claim 10, further comprising performing the nitric acid solution dip at a concentration of between about 50% and 100% by weight.

12. (new) The method of claim 10, further comprising applying the nitric acid solution dip for a time span of between about 10 seconds and 30 minutes.

13. (new) The method of claim 12, further comprising applying the nitric acid solution dip in a time span of about 200 seconds.

14. (new) The method of claim 10, further comprising applying the nitric acid solution dip at a temperature of between about 10°C and 80°C.

15. (new) The method of claim 10, further comprising performing the phosphoric acid solution dip at a concentration of between about 200 volumes of water to about 1 volume of phosphoric acid and about 1 volume of water to about 1 volume of phosphoric acid.

16. (new) The method of claim 10, further comprising applying the phosphoric acid solution dip at a temperature of between about 10°C and 80°C.

17. (new) The method of claim 10, further comprising applying the phosphoric acid solution dip for a time span of between about 10 seconds and 10 minutes.

18. (new) The method of claim 10, wherein the phosphoric acid solution dip further includes a fluorine-containing component.

19. (new) The method of claim 18, wherein the fluorine-containing component includes hydrofluoric acid.

20. (new) The method of claim 18, wherein the fluorine-containing component includes ammonium fluoride.

21. (new) A method of fabricating a via in a dielectric layer and an underlying barrier layer for a semiconductor device, comprising:
forming a partial via in the dielectric layer to expose at least portion of the barrier layer;
cleaning the partial via with a phosphoric acid-containing solution;
etching the barrier layer after the cleaning to form a full via having a metal containing trace on a bottom surface thereof; and
applying a nitric-acid containing solution to the full via.

22. (new) The method of claim 21, further comprising applying the nitric acid-containing solution at a concentration of between about 50% and 100% by weight.

23. (new) The method of claim 21, further comprising applying the nitric acid-containing solution for a time span of between about 10 seconds and 30 minutes.

24. (new) The method of claim 23, further comprising applying the nitric acid-containing solution in a time span of about 200 seconds.

25. (new) The method of claim 21, further comprising applying the nitric acid-containing solution at a temperature of between about 10°C and 80°C.

26. (new) The method of claim 21, further comprising cleaning the partial via with the phosphoric acid-containing solution at a concentration of between about 200 volumes of water to about 1 volume of phosphoric acid and about 1 volume of water to about 1 volume of phosphoric acid.

27. (new) The method of claim 21, further comprising cleaning the partial via with the phosphoric acid-containing solution at a temperature of between about 10°C and 80°C.

28. (new) The method of claim 21, further comprising cleaning the partial via with the phosphoric acid-containing solution for a time span of between about 10 seconds and 10 minutes.

29. (new) The method of claim 21, wherein the phosphoric acid-containing solution further includes a fluorine-containing component.

30. (new) The method of claim 29, wherein the fluorine-containing component includes hydrofluoric acid.

31. (new) The method of claim 29, wherein the fluorine-containing component includes ammonium fluoride.